

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 3, 4, 9, and 10 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amended claims 1, 7, and 13 to improve form and/or include allowable subject matter. Claims 1, 2, 5-8, and 11-15 remain pending.

In the last Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-9, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on U.S. Patent No. 6,002,082 ("*Chujoh*"); allowed claims 13-15; objected to claims 4, 5, 10, and 11 for depending upon rejected base claims; and indicated claims 4, 5, 10, and 11 contained allowable subject matter.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 13-15 and indicating claims 4, 5, 10, and 11 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1-3, 6-9, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on *Chujoh*. However, in order to advance the prosecution of this application, Applicant has canceled claims 3 and 9 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amended claims 1 and 7 to include allowable subject matter recited in claims 4 and 10, respectively. Accordingly, the rejection of independent claims 1 and 7, and their respective dependent claims 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Further, Applicant notes that the Office Action contains numerous statements reflecting apparent assertions concerning the related art and claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is addressed specifically herein, Applicant declines to

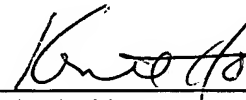
automatically subscribe to any assertion and/or characterization set forth in the Office Action.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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